

Police Say Panther Raid May Have Been Bad Tactic

From News Dispatches

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 9—A high police official said today the decision to raid the Black Panther headquarters here Monday may have been a tactical error.

The result was a four-hour siege and shootout in which six persons, including three policemen, were wounded.

Assistant Police Chief Robert Houghton, who headed the raiding party, said the decision to stage the predawn search was reached after several conferences at which a number of alternative plans were discussed.

"In hindsight," Houghton said, "I don't know whether this was the best tactic."

Purpose of Raid

Acting Police Chief Harold Gates said the purpose of the raid was to serve warrants for illegal possession of weapons.

He said an officer went to the Panther headquarters last week to check a complaint of a noisy jukebox and was ordered to leave by persons armed with a pistol and a shotgun. During the same week, Gates reported, two patrolmen said they saw a man at a window of the Panther headquarters with a machine gun at the ready.

Monday's raid resulted in the confiscation of 25 automatic weapons, three shot-

guns, two Thompson submachine guns, eight rifles, three handguns and a large quantity of ammunition, some of it armor-piercing.

The raid was the latest in a series of police-Panther confrontations that have resulted in the death of 28 members of the Negro group since January, 1968, according to Charles Garry, white attorney for the Panthers' national headquarters in Oakland. Two Panthers were fatally shot during a police raid in Chicago last Thursday.

Investigation Urged

In Chicago, the NAACP has petitioned Mayor Richard J. Daley, Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie and U.S. Attorney General John N. Mitchell to investigate the shooting deaths.

Whitney Young, executive director of the National Urban League, sent this telegram to Attorney General Mitchell.

"In light of repeated charges from various quarters that there appears to be a deliberate attempt by local and federal law enforcement officials to annihilate Panthers, urgently request special investigation by your office.

Grand Jury Inquiries

"Also urgently request special federal grand jury inquiries be convened in various jurisdictions where nearly 30

Panthers have been murdered by law enforcement officials in several communities throughout the United States."

Gov. Ronald Reagan, who had been told that the raid would be made, said:

"I think it is a tragic and deplorable thing, but it is clear the Black Panthers have made their policy one of violence and outright revolution. The answer lies with the overwhelming majority of the black community who have proven they are fine, solid citizens but who unfortunately are the biggest victims of those who break the law."



Associated Press

Detective shows arms he says were taken from Panthers.